



NPS Photo

Ranger-Led Activities — Winter 2007 through Spring 2008

Join a Big Cypress Ranger or Volunteer for programs that explore the wonders of the Big Cypress Swamp. For details on activities and to make reservations call: (239) 695-1201. Reservations are accepted up to 14 days in advance of the activity date. Scheduled activities are free. Programs begin December 22, 2007, and go through April 14, 2008.

Big Cypress Activities	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
"What's Out Here?" — Twice daily. 1:00 and 2:00 p.m., 15 minute talks. Join a Ranger or Volunteer at H. P. Williams wildlife viewing platform to see what you can discover. Wildlife sightings often include alligators, fishes, turtles and a variety of colorful wading birds. No reservations required.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
"Scales, Teeth and Big Tail!" or "Wings of Wonder!" – 2:00 p.m., 20 minute talks. Join a Ranger or Volunteer on the Oasis wildlife viewing platform for a talk about our largest native freshwater reptile, the alligator or take a short stroll with a Ranger or Volunteer through the Oasis butterfly garden. Discoveries abound! No reservations required.	X		X		X		X
Cypress Sights and Sounds - Boardwalk Stroll – 2:00 p.m., (1 hour). Explore a cypress forest while venturing into the heart of a cypress strand during this one mile leisurely stroll on the Kirby Storter boardwalk. Carry water. Binoculars and insect repellent optional. Meet at the boardwalk trailhead along US 41. No reservations required.				X		X	X
Wet and Wild Swamp Walks – (2 hours). This is a great way to experience the swamp and discover what's beyond the road! Cypress knees and sawgrass make long pants necessary. Wear sturdy shoes that you can get wet and muddy. Bring a change of clothes, including shoes, for your ride home. Reservations required. (Not offered: Saturday - January 26th or February 23rd.)		X 10:00 a.m.					X 1:00 p.m.
Heart of the Swamp Canoe Trips – Saturdays, Sundays, and Wednesday - January 30th, February 27th, and March 26th – 9:30 a.m. (4 – 5 hours). We'll provide canoes and equipment or you may bring your own. Come prepared with water, food, binoculars, sun protection and insect repellent. These trips vary by weather, water level, tide and ranger's choice of location and duration. Knowing canoeing basics is helpful. Limited to 10 canoes or kayaks. Reservations required.	X			X			X
Walk on the Wild Side - Deep Lake and Gator Hook Hikes – 1:00 p.m. Location changes on alternate weeks. Deep Lake is one of the few natural sinkhole lakes south of Lake Okeechobee, the hike in is a discovery walk (2 hours). Gator Hook Strand is a more rugged hike, providing an opportunity to see a variety of plants deep in the swamp. (3 hours.) On either hike be prepared to get wet. Long pants necessary. Wear sturdy shoes that you can get wet and muddy. Bring a change of clothes, including shoes, for your ride home. Come prepared with water, food, binoculars, sun protection and insect repellent. Hikes begin 1/06/08, with the Deep Lake hike. Call the Visitor Center for details on where to meet. Reservations required.	X						
Campfire Programs - Fridays and Saturdays - January 4th through March 22nd. 7:30 p.m. (1 hour). Friday evening programs at Midway Campground. Saturday evening programs at Monument Lake Campground. Ranger choice for talk topics. Learn more about the natural and cultural history of this region. Bring a folding chair. Insect repellent optional. No reservations required.						X	X


More Programs, and activities you can do on your own on back page.
Due to unforeseen circumstances this schedule is subject to change.
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Photos by Niki Butcher; Charles Lachamacher, NPS Volunteer; Jan Shirey, NPS Volunteer

Photos by Jan Shirey, NPS Volunteer



Ranger Specials	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Fire Prairie Trail Bike Hike – Saturday, January 26th – (4 hours). Five mile round trip ride on a natural trail over rough terrain. Bring your own bike. Meet the Ranger at the Fire Prairie trailhead, approximately 14 miles north on the Turner River Road. Open vistas abound. Reservations required.							X
Hike to the Big Trees - Old Growth Cypress – Saturday, February 23rd – (6 hours). Rugged five mile round trip hike on the Florida Trail south to Robert’s Lake Strand where old growth that escaped the loggers’ chain saws still stands. Be prepared to get wet. Long pants necessary. Wear sturdy shoes that you can get wet and muddy. Bring a change of clothes, including shoes, for your ride home. Reservations required.							X
Owl Prowl – Whoo’s Out At Night? – Evening Boardwalk Stroll – Friday - January 4th, February 8th, and March 7th, 6:00 pm, (1 hour). Explore night sounds in a cypress forest habitat. Bring a flashlight and water. Insect repellent optional. Meet at the boardwalk trailhead along US 41. Reservations required. 						X	

Activities On Your Own

There are many opportunities to explore Big Cypress National Preserve on your own or with your friends. For details on various activities stop by the Oasis Visitor Center and ask rangers for further information on access into the Preserve. You may also visit our website at www.nps.gov/bicy for further details.

Safety First	When traveling in Big Cypress National Preserve whether by car, foot, canoe, or off-road vehicle, always let someone know where you are going. Remember to fill out a backcountry permit if you are entering at one of the backcountry access points. To enjoy your visit be prepared by bringing water, food, insect repellent, sturdy shoes, and protection from the sun. Always be aware of your surroundings and respectful of the wildlife.
Wildlife Viewing	The Preserve’s expanse creates the possibility of viewing a wide variety of wildlife. You may see a multitude of bird life, or alligators and the fish they prey on, or even catch a glimpse of a black bear or the endangered Florida panther. Please observe wildlife respectfully and never attempt to feed or approach! Wildlife observation platforms are located at H. P. Williams Picnic Area - at the corner of Turner River Road and U. S. 41 (Tamiami Trail), and at the Oasis Visitor Center.
Driving	Excellent prospects for wildlife viewing by car can be found off of the Tamiami Trail on the scenic Loop Road or on the Turner River/Birdon Road loop. These gravel roads offer a passage for the patient observer to see the Preserve’s animal life and a multitude of subtropical habitats. You can help protect wildlife by observing the speed limit on all roads. Refer to the preserve map, or visit the visitor center for detailed locations of roads.
Walking	Kirby Storter Boardwalk is a one mile round trip adventure located off U.S. 41. Recommended year round, the trail offers an opportunity to submerge yourself into a beautiful cypress strand. Approximately half way along Loop Road is another short walk called Tree Snail Hammock Trail. This shady nature walk allows you to explore the mysteries of a tropical hardwood hammock in the southern portion of the Preserve.
Hiking	The Florida National Scenic Trail runs from North to South through the heart of Big Cypress. This trail, over forty miles long, presents excellent backpacking opportunities. A shorter hike, Fire Prairie Trail is five miles round trip and is found off of the northern end of Turner River Road. The trail provides superb views of several of South Florida’s habitats. Areas designated in the preserve for off road vehicles are also available to explorers on foot, but hikers need to safely give way to the off road vehicles when necessary.
Canoeing	Wander the waters of Big Cypress by bringing your own canoe or kayak, or renting them in nearby communities. The access for Turner River Canoe Trail is located along U.S. 41. Halfway Creek Canoe Trail offers another option and the ramp is also located off of U.S. 41 at the end of Seagrape Drive by Preserve headquarters. Typical canoe trips in the area will take a minimum of two to three hours.
Biking	Within the Preserve, many of the gravel roads off of Tamiami Trail, and several of the off-road vehicle trails, provide opportunities for exploration by bicycle. The Bear Island Grade, accessible from State Road 29, is a popular route. While biking in the preserve please be aware of traffic. While on backcountry trails yield to hikers and ORVs. For more details on biking opportunities speak to a ranger at the Oasis Visitor Center.

The Oasis Visitor Center in Big Cypress National Preserve is located mid-way between Naples and Miami on the Tamiami Trail (Hwy 41). Hours of operation: 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. daily. Closed December 25th. For an introduction to Big Cypress National Preserve, a 15 minute movie, *The Living Waters of Big Cypress*, is available for viewing. Also located at Oasis is a boardwalk for wildlife viewing and access to the Florida National Scenic Trail.